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GUN RUNNER BREEZES FIVE FURLONGS IN 1:00 FOR KENTUCKY DERBY 142

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, April 17, 2016) – Winchell Thoroughbreds LLC and Three Chimney Farm's **Gun Runner**, the leader on the Road to the Kentucky Derby Leaderboard with 151 points, continued his serious preparation for the May 7 Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Grade I) with a five-furlong breeze in 1:00 over a fast track Monday morning at Churchill Downs.

With regular rider **Florent Geroux** in the irons, Gun Runner worked in company with 4-year-old gelding **Gold Hawk**, who was timed in 1:00.60. Gun Runner began the breeze one length back of Gold Hawk and finished two lengths in front after being timed in eighth-mile splits of :12.80, :24.40, :36.40 and :48. The son of Candy Ride galloped out six furlongs in 1:13.20.

"I thought he breezed very well this morning and has settled into Churchill very nicely," trainer **Steve Asmussen** said. "I thought that he handled the racetrack very well and I'm obviously very excited about our opportunities. He's a tremendous individual as far as conformation and pedigree-wise and he's got a great attitude. He's very energetic as far as training goes; he's always been very effortless over the racetrack."

Monday's breeze was his third work since his 4 1/2-length Louisiana Derby triumph on March 26. He went four furlongs in :50.60 on April 4 and five furlongs in 1:01 on April 11.

"I'm going to need more of a blow with him next week," Asmussen said. "I think today had a lot to do with what I want to go with next week's work and what adjustments I need to make and talking to Florent before we've worked him in the past. He wasn't ready for the Kentucky Jockey Club last year just because of how easy he does minutes and I think how we structure the work will matter and I thought he cooled out easily today and I think we're going to have to stretch him a bit between now and the Derby."

Gun Runner will enter Kentucky Derby 142 off of two solid Grade II stakes victories at Fair Grounds in the Louisiana Derby and Risen Star. His lone defeat in five career starts came in last year's Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) at Churchill Downs where he was fourth beaten 5 1/4 lengths.

"I was probably a little over confident going into it," Asmussen said of the Kentucky Jockey Club. "He needed a little more off of just two races against some more seasoned horses. I think he's matured nicely and put in two great runs this year. He's gotten more out of his training recently.

"I don't think we have to worry about if he does handle the course. The scenario is that there are 20 horses and I don't think they'll all love the surface and I don't think we'll have to worry about that with him."

In addition to Gun Runner, Asmussen has another Kentucky Derby starter in **Creator**, the 1 1/4-length winner of Saturday's Arkansas Derby.

"The horse [Creator] is definitely getting good at the right time," Asmussen said. "I'm very proud of him off of Saturday's victory and he is expected in here later today. Right now I am very proud of the condition my two horses are in at this point. I think as things sort out closer I'll get the feeling of how well they're going to do on that day. Right now I'm just extremely happy and now the focus will be on sharpening them up or what we think they need between now and the Derby."

Two of Asmussen and **Stonestreet Stables'** Longines Kentucky Oaks prospects also breezed Monday. Fantasy winner **Terra Promessa** went a half mile in :51.40 after splits of :13, :25.40 and 38.60 and a gallop out of 1:06.80. Gazelle runner-up **Royal Obsession** went four furlongs in :51.40 with splits of :13, :25.60, :38.80 and a gallop out of 1:06.

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“For both of the fillies it was their first breeze since the race and I thought they all went well,” Asmussen said. “It’s a great comfort coming back with horses for the Oaks and the Derby that have been here before. They’ve spent so much time here so I think they settle in here so much easier and fall right back into rhythm. I’m extremely blessed with how sound the group is coming in here. There was a big development last night with the obvious division leader [**Songbird**] out of the Oaks. Honestly, I think that gives you a shot. Being optimistic is one thing but thinking you were going to beat her is something completely different.”

Three-year-old fillies **Stageplay** and **Adore** breezed in company, as well. They went five furlongs in 1:00 (:13, :24.80, :36.80, :48.40 with gallop outs of 1:13.20 and 1:28.60)

“Stageplay is aiming at the Eight Belles with Adore,” Asmussen said. “Adore is a very talented filly, but I’ll speak with **Mr. Winchell** with having both her and **Taxable**.”

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